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George Eliot not at all. Scott's name occurs more frequently, though usually in a negative connection; Mr. Van Doren attempts to show that any seeming influence of his is more apparent than real. Although he says nothing about it, the author's theory seems to be that the American novel is almost entirely a separate development, owing but very little to England or France or Russia.

As a whole, the book is by no means the last word on the history of the American novel. It is valuable as being a pioneer work, but it will soon be superseded.

W. P. JONES.

Cornell University

THE HOUSE OF LYNCH. By Leonard Merrick. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 1920. Pp. x, 324.

Mr. Merrick's preoccupation as a writer is not quite that of the *illuminati* of his generation: he is not markedly subjective, and does not believe, apparently, that the psychological novel is supreme. True, his atmospheres have verity; his characterizations are, if swiftly implied and suggested, by no means unconvincing; but it is upon plot, upon surprise and suspense and the dramatic crisis and reversal, that he depends for his very human effects. He is not a very skilful analyzer of motives, of—

“The soul o' the purpose, ere 't is shaped as act,”

adroitly though he impels his feminine characters to realize themselves through whim and impulse. Indeed, Mr. Merrick's spirit is far more companionable than philosophic, more ardent than sagacious.

Nevertheless, he is a citizen of his own time in the increasing interest he is showing in social problems, particularly those involving conflict between true and conventional morality. In the present novel, he is concerned with the moral danger involved in the life of such a social monstrosity as a multi-millionaire whose wealth has been gained through deceits, treacheries and brutalities ‘within the law’. Jordan B. Lynch has achieved his capitalistic power by means of just such a programme, and has

succeeded in justifying himself to himself on the ground that business is business, as chess is chess, and that both must be managed with detached ruthlessness. He has a son, Howard, whose early death puts an end to a "a profligacy of lassitude", and a daughter, Betty, who resembles her mother, a gentlewoman. Betty, of course, is spoiled, and when she falls in love with an English artist, Richard Keith, a poor man who worships her but who doggedly refuses to marry her unless she foregoes further financial dependence upon her father, her scornful reaction gives way to a determination matching his own: she will, in any case, marry him! How she brings this to pass is related, as are also the early bliss of the couple; their practical difficulties; the increasing strain their love suffers in the face of need and of vulgar surroundings; the visit of Jordan Lynch to their London villa and his unsuccessful war of words with Keith; the struggles of Betty to persuade herself that Keith must be right and that her natural longing for at least a minimum of the old comfort is wrong; the birth of a baby and his critical illness owing to the lack of good air; Betty's arrival at the breaking-point when an operation on the child becomes necessary, and her application to Lynch for help; her growing estrangement from Keith; her return to her father in New York; her clear-sighted repentance there and her decision to go back to England and sustain herself in a small village on the hundred pounds a year left her by her grandfather, until she could learn how, in all sincerity, to be a poor man's wife; Keith's growing reputation as a painter and his unceasing hunger for her presence; Jordan Lynch's death and her sole inheriting of his fortune; her plan to distribute the tainted millions among worthy charities; Keith's discovery of the whereabouts of herself and child, and the happy reunion of the little family, facing a wholesome and promising future.

Such is the story, and it is told with much skill, and with a justified emphasis upon dialogue and conversation as advancing action and displaying character. Its movement is very rapid, but the scenario obviously calls for swift action, for nervous sketching-in, which, of course, is by no means incompatible with really good realistic work, as both Mr. Merrick and Mr. Swinnerton have shown. An objection should be registered, how-

ever, to the ironic passage on page 36 as out of harmony with what the story elsewhere proclaims to be the really 'heroic' quality of the love in question:—

“Though Keith was by no means essential to her happiness, she fancied that he was, and a sentimental illusion may create quite as much ferment as an heroic love.”

Mr. G. K. Chesterton supplies a short but capable introduction.

THE EASTERN QUESTION AND ITS SOLUTION. By Professor Morris Jastrow, Jr. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott & Company. 1920.

This book is one of the by-products of a great scholar whose death is a heavy loss to the world of scholarship and letters. All men of letters, sooner or later, reach the point in their development where they become Athenians. All Athenians fancy that they are statesmen and fully qualified to appear in a Platonic dialogue with plans for remodelling states. Prophecy is one of their ways of entertaining themselves and interesting and instructing the public. This book is both instructive and interesting. The reasons suggested for the failure of the diplomacy of the Western powers in the Levant are good and the survey of conditions in the lands involved is, I believe, approximately correct for the time it was written. The suggestion that the question can be solved by internationalism does not, however, suit the real wishes either of England or of America, and storms will rise in the East for many years to come. There are as many solutions of the Eastern question as there are peoples or nations interested, and what the final settlement will be lies in the lap of chance. My own knowledge of the factors that determine the problem is too slight for any attempt at a more exact valuation, but it seems that the march of events itself has placed this work among 'occasional pieces'. It is written in an agreeable style—the master is out for a holiday—yet with undoubted insight into the situation, and two of its conclusions rather appeal to conservative Americans: first, that the Eastern Question can never be settled satisfactorily without the coöpera-